


EURARMY

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SPRING 2007



12th Combat Aviation Brigade Prepares for War

**V Corps' Year in Iraq
Polish Troops at JMRC
'I Love You. Goodbye.'**

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Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Russell Cooley, 1st Combat Camera Squadron

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EURArmy

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Cover: A CH-47 Chinook of Company B, 5th Bn., 158th Aviation Regiment, stands ready for night operations training. Photo by Arthur McQueen.

Back Cover: A Polish Soldier peers around a corner during training at Hohenfels. Photo by Sgt. Aimee Millham.

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COMMANDER'S NOTES

Over the past few months, we have welcomed back many units from long deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Both those Soldiers and the team that kept the home fires burning – family readiness groups, rear detachments, spouses and communities – are heroes for our nation. I am always proud of the way our Troopers, families and civilians support each other during deployments. Other units and Soldiers remain deployed, and we look forward to their return as well.

Winning the Global War on Terrorism is still our number-one priority with U.S. Army, Europe units constantly preparing to deploy. This year we will deploy the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, and numerous other combat and combat service support companies and individual augmentees. The training these Troopers receive prepares them for the rigors of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The leadership of these units is dedicated to ensuring every Soldier has the training and equipment required and is prepared in every way. Leaders leading from out front and leaders communicating clearly and consistently with those they lead are the glue that holds our formations together.

USAREUR's major training areas at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, homes of the Joint

Multinational Training Command and the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, respectively, are where these units conduct a large part of their training for deployment. The maneuver and live-fire range complex, Improvised Explosive Device training lane and live-fire convoy range – along with a world-class opposing force – ensure that every Soldier is ready for the rigors of combat.

These training areas are not exclusively for U.S. Soldiers. They are also used by our sister services and international partners. Recently, a Polish airborne unit conducted training in preparation for their upcoming deployment. The joint and multinational features of the JMTC and JMRC are always present.

Our international coalition partners and allies are always welcome to train at the JMTC and JMRC. Noncommissioned officers from seven nations have attended our noncommissioned officer academy at Grafenwoehr. Similarly, as part of our Theater Security Cooperation Program, the trainers at the JMTC and JMRC participate in training exercises in other countries – a vital component to increasing our coalition partners and allies.

This summer, we will conduct the first training rotation under the command and control of Joint Task Force-East. A task force from USAREUR will deploy to



Romania for four months and conduct a series of exercises in Romania, Bulgaria and other regional locations.

As the Global War on Terrorism continues, I am ever appreciative of our family members and civilians. As our Troopers deploy, the civilian employees fill in the gaps and continue the mission. Likewise, our family members volunteer in their communities and family readiness groups, keeping our communities vibrant.

Thank you for caring about keeping USAREUR a great place to live and to soldier. And thanks to the entire USAREUR family – Soldiers, family members and civilians – for your devotion and service to your nation.

DAVID D. MCKIERNAN
General, USA
Commanding

Last Blast for 1-1 Cav.



Photo by Dave Melancon

A 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment M3A2 Bradley cavalry fighting vehicle crew takes on targets with its 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun during the unit's last European Tank Table VIII gunnery Feb. 21. Table VIII tests a tank crew's ability to take on targets during day and night engagements.

Additionally, 13 of the Blackhawk Squadron's 27 tank crews earned "distinguished scores" — shooting more than 900 points; 10 of the 41 Bradley cavalry vehicle crews captured perfect scores — scoring 100 percent "GO" on all 10 Table VIII tasks.

"Tank and Bradley gunnery is very important to a cavalry squadron," said Lt. Col. Matthew McKenna, squadron commander.

The Blackhawk Squadron will inactivate in June.

"For 1-1 Cav. and Buedingen, this will be the last visit to Grafenwoehr," McKenna said. "Nobody wants to deactivate a unit, especially the 1-1 Cav., but the Army has not forgotten about the 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment."

'Words from the field'

"I'm just glad I was there to take care of my Soldiers and bring them home safely. To me, I was just doing my job and what I was trained to do."

Staff Sgt. David Anderson, 1st Armored Division, after he was awarded the Silver Star for actions in a Sept. 24 incident in Ramadi, Iraq.

"The first thing he told me when I walked up to shake his hand was that he was honored to be in my presence. I told him that I, too, was honored (to meet him)."

1st Sgt. Randy Collins, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, on meeting President George W. Bush while in Latvia representing the U.S. military for a NATO summit.

"A platoon leader can give a direction; NCOs make it happen. It's what makes the difference in this fight, in every fight. NCOs are what make this unit go."

Capt. David Gohlich, commander, Iron Company, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, on his Soldiers' success while training in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

She Said Yes!



Photo by Gary Kieffer

Spc. Scott Probst, 501st Field Support Battalion, proposes marriage to Sgt. Yustina Aguilera, upon his return from Iraq, Feb. 16. Probst is one of the many Soldiers who recently returned to Friedberg after a year-plus rotation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Probst and Aguilera met in Baghdad during OIF I and began dating after returning to Germany. They were married March 8 and plan a move to Florida this summer.

Probst plans to enter school to become a chef and Aguilera will be studying graphic design. Probst is a Bradenton, Fla., native and Aguilera is from Tijuana, Mexico.

“Wings of Victory” prepare to fly to Iraq

Story and photos by Arthur McQueen



The 12th Combat Aviation Brigade was formed Aug. 7 from U.S. Army, Europe's once separate aviation units, all with specific roles to play in executing fast-moving operations – getting troops to the battlefield, raining firepower down on the enemy or moving supplies to areas ground transportation can't reach.

Now integrated into a modular unit of seven battalions and more than 4,000 Soldiers, most of the brigade recently completed validation at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, Germany, for deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Simultaneously, 12th CAB continues to transform into USAREUR's single-source provider of combat rotary-wing air power, combat support and aviation

combat service support for combatant commanders.

Building a new unit from existing assets while preparing for wartime operations in Iraq has provided some challenges, said Col. Timothy J. Edens, 12th CAB commander.

“If someone were to tell me two years ago that when taking brigade command that I would have this much change and transformation going on, I would not have believed them,” he said. “It has been the ultimate challenge, but I will tell you the payback is tenfold.”

“The names change, the guidons (company flags) change, but the people remain the same. It takes some getting used to, but I think we came out ready for our new mission,” said Capt. Caleb

Vandyken, Co. B, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment.

With units formerly assigned to the 1st Armored and 1st Infantry divisions, the 11th and 12th Aviation regiments and others, the 12th CAB now has two attack reconnaissance battalions: the 2nd and 3rd, 159th Avn., which together field and maintain 48 AH-64 Apaches.

The 5th Bn., 158th Avn., is the General Support Aviation Battalion. It supplies heavy-lift capability with 12 CH-47 Chinooks, and includes a brigade-level fuel distribution company, air traffic support and maintenance companies, and 20 UH-60 Blackhawks, which perform multiple roles.

Second Bn., 147th Avn., a stateside National Guard unit, will join 3rd Bn.,



Apaches of the 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, one of two Attack Reconnaissance Battalions in the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, line up Feb. 24 for maintenance upgrades before a mission readiness exercise in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

158th Avn. These identical battalions will serve as the brigade's air assault arm, each using 30 Blackhawks to move troops to and from the battlefield.

All five combat or combat support battalions have integral headquarters, maintenance and support companies.

The 1st Bn., 214th Avn., contains the only fixed-wing assets in the brigade – 10 C-12 and six C-35 transport and utility aircraft – plus 32 Blackhawks serving command, control and communication, and medical evacuation functions.

Air traffic control operations are the responsibility of the 3rd Bn., 58th Avn. Regt., which is scheduled to redesignate as an airfield operations detachment.

Rounding out the brigade is the 412th

Avn. Support Bn., the largest by number of Soldiers. It contains brigade-level maintenance, signal and distribution assets.

Training

To begin validation, the brigade self-deployed Feb. 12 to gunnery ranges and training sites at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels. It continued to use its home stations of Illesheim and Ansbach, Germany, to simulate other locations downrange.

Once on site, 12th CAB conducted combat training operations, combat support, combat service support and force sustainment training operations, and practiced coordinating with their home-station rear detachment.

In the initial phase of training for validation, the brigade exercised its tactical operations centers while the companies trained on their own, said Maj. Bryan Hoff, 12th CAB plans and operations officer.

"There are things company commanders need to get at, which they can't do if higher headquarters is involved," Hoff said.

Engaging in situational training exercises at the company level allowed Soldiers to build from basic skill sets to more complicated challenges, that require the participation of the entire deploying force, said Lt. Col. Guy Zero, 5th Bn., 158th Avn. commander.

Pilots, aircrews and maintenance personnel launched from airfield "Sierra



Chief Warrant Officer Bryce Peery, Co. A, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, crouches in the engine cover of his UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to perform some of his pre-flight checks in Hohenfels, Germany. Peery, a pilot, said he has complete faith in his maintainers and crew chiefs. "They work a lot of long hours and do a great job. The UH-60 is an incredible aircraft that can do a wide variety of missions. You are never stuck in a rut; there is always something different to do."

40," starting with single aircraft and continuing with increasingly complex day and night missions.

"When you add night-vision goggles to the equation of flying, the complexity goes way up," Vandyken said. "We absolutely operate at night; it is one of our tasks as an air assault company."

Night air assaults carrying up to 40 fully laden Soldiers make crew teamwork even more important, said Chief Warrant Officer Kevin L. Hays,

Chinook pilot-in-command. "Night provides better cover for the ground troops, and once you are on the ground, you want them off as fast as possible. We are such a big target (100 feet from front to rear blade tip), in a hover we rely completely on the flight engineer, crew chief and door gunner, they are my eyes and ears."

"Our Soldiers are solid, with a strong base of skills," Zero said. "We have a very diverse set of missions, providing

heavy lift, command and control, aero medical evacuation capability, maintenance assets, fuel distribution support to the brigade and an air traffic support company."

"It would be easier to have a unit that was all the same – all Blackhawks for example," he continued, "but this makes for a unique opportunity to lead Soldiers."

"Everybody knows you don't judge your importance to the organization by your proximity to the tip of the spear," Zero said. "The maintainers and refuelers are just as important as the crew chiefs and pilots to getting the mission done."

Other pilots agree.

"You cannot do it without them.

Everybody that works on these aircraft, that rearms and refuels these aircraft, they don't get enough credit," said Chief Warrant Officer Dennis A. Seymour, the brigade master gunner.

An 18-year veteran Apache pilot, Seymour was a driving force behind the year-long planning of the combat operations training centerpiece, a joint live-fire exercise using 2nd Bn., 159th Avn., Apaches.

"Operation Phantom Dagger was one of the key events in ensuring our combat readiness for deployment," said Lt. Col. Kevin Christensen, 2nd Bn., 159th Avn. commander, who participated alongside his battalion's Apache crews.

Many elements of the live-fire were unusual or first-ever events for Grafenwoehr: attacking with fire-on-the-move tactics – instead of Cold War-era hovering methods – firing high explosive rockets; employing unmanned aerial vehicle support from the 501st Military Intelligence Bn., and coordinating suppression of enemy air defense fire and call-for-fire missions from the Multiple Launch Rocket Systems of 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery, 1st Armored Division.

Starting early in the morning at a cold and damp Grafenwoehr Forward Arming and Refueling Point, Soldiers carefully loaded Hellfire missiles and 2.75 inch HE rockets into the Apaches.

Mindful of the 10 pounds of high explosive contained within each rocket, the crews grounded the tubes by touching a metal strip gently to the helicopter, neutralizing the static charge.

"Just like if you are working with a computer, we ground the missiles and rockets so that no static electricity sets off the ordnance prematurely," said Pfc. Kevin Engelstad, a Co. C avionics,

Soldiers from the Republic of Georgia's 33rd Light Infantry Battalion exit a UH-60 Blackhawk flown by Co. B, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. The two units trained together in Hohenfels, and may work together during a future deployment to Iraq.



electronics and armaments specialist. "We do everything in our power to create a safe environment."

Dynamic maneuvering and high explosives meant a wide safety zone for observers. But the realism of sitting in a cockpit firing live ammunition is vital to preparing the unit for deployment, Seymour said.

"We don't want the pilots to be downrange the first time they see this stuff go off. By using the tactics that we will be using when we deploy, the pilots don't have to worry if they are doing the right thing, they can just engage the enemy," he said.

While Apache-mounted rockets, Hellfire missiles and MLRS rockets rained down on the "enemy," 1st AD's UAVs put a remote 'eye in the sky' inside the safety zone.

The battlefield awareness provided by the UAVs is a distinct advantage, Seymour said.

"The commander can look at the battlefield, and decide what he needs to do, with what aircraft, and what tactics he needs to use," he said.

Soldiers with OIF experience, such as Cpl. Brian Edinger, Co. C, 501st MI Bn., Shadow UAV mission commander, add boots-on-the-ground knowledge to the exercise.

"It is more combat realistic (to train) coordinating between fire control, rotary-wing traffic and any potential bombing missions. It replicates what we experienced downrange," he said. "If I had this experience before I went to

Iraq, I would have been a lot better off."

Christensen flew one of the 12 Apaches participating in the live fire, and the near-perfect success rate of the exercise left him visibly pumped up.

"There are very few things in this world as good as being an attack helicopter pilot in the United States Army," he said, smiling. "This exercise brought the whole team together, focusing on all the integration of fires, intelligence and maneuver and all of our battle command systems."

"There is a 'hooah' aspect to this," said Edens. "Apache drivers live to pull

The FARP team pumped almost 10,000 gallons of fuel, loaded 46 Hellfires and 274 rockets, and maintained their aircraft over the target for sustained effect for more than four hours, validating their training.

"That is a great accomplishment. It's really a great tribute to the young Soldier who was working all night getting that aircraft ready and was there loading and getting them ready to go," Christensen said.

"There is definitely a pride you feel," Engelstad said, "when you see the aircraft you have been maintaining for the better part of a year, flying and executing properly."

"The dining facility will be on fire with stories tonight," Hoff said.

Deployment doesn't end training

One tactical advantage 12th CAB's attack reconnaissance battalions will have while downrange is the Longbow Crew Trainer, a self-contained, deployable flight simulator, where Apache crews can prepare for any conceivable mission, any time, in any weather.

"We are the first unit taking this device to capstone training," Christensen said. "I can take this with me on deployment and use it to hone the skills we aren't usually able to practice."

"We can evaluate a crew's ability to react under emergency situations that we would not want to replicate in the actual aircraft, events that really test the crew."



Seen from outside the safety zone two and a half miles away through haze, a Co. C, 2-159th Apache launches a Hellfire at a target on the Grafenwoehr Training Area.

triggers and launch Hellfires, but the training aspect is what is vital to our leaders and what this exercise really means to us. This level of training is bringing back skills we have not exercised to this degree over the last few years."

The pilots were not the only ones proving their mettle, Christensen said.



Dismounted infantrymen from 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment board a Blackhawk during air assault training in Hohenfels, Germany.

“The training is good for our Soldiers and our army. We have not had training with helicopters, ambushes and convoy operations,” he said, adding, “They are getting better, but the training is not yet over.”

Inkoshvili said his soldiers are highly motivated and eager to improve, especially after their training securing and searching a fictional “Iraqi” town populated with Joint Multinational Readiness Center observer/controllers, opposition forces and “civilians.” In Hohenfels, as in Iraq, the friendliness or hostility of the locals is something the troops have to assess and react to themselves.

The cordon-and-search mission involved moving Georgian troops in three waves of three UH-60 Blackhawks – first to form an outside perimeter around the town preventing movement, then to secure an inside perimeter for the final wave to move inside the town and search it for illegal weapons.

“It is important to give the Georgians an opportunity to work alongside their coalition partners, such as the 12th CAB, in training that the U.S. Soldiers go through,” said Maj. Michael S. Willis, a JMRC observer/controller.

“It will give commanders downrange in the same sector, or a battalion commander that would meet up with these guys, a kind of guarantee that they would react in the same ways and understand the same tactical concepts,” he said.

JMRC is an ideal place to train, Willis said, because the environment is close to “real-world” conditions.

“You can’t replace the trainer for ‘switchology’ training,” said Chief Warrant Officer Marcus Vanney, pilot-in-charge.

He and Capt. Patrick J. Taylor, Vanney’s co-pilot, use this term for the complex series of controls and procedures needed to fly the multimillion-dollar aircraft.

The in-line seating of the Apache prevents eye contact and requires the crew to rely on computers and audio cues, Taylor said, adding that a crew’s integration and timing are critical to their survival in combat.

“You have to know exactly what to tell a guy, everyone reacts differently. You have to verbalize what you need and what you are doing,” Vanney said.

The trainer can also house ground force personnel in a separate compartment, fostering not only the vital working relationship between Apache crews but simulating the coordination with supported units, Christensen said.

Moving troops to battle

“It’s always great to be working with the ground guys. That is what our lift assets get paid to do,” Edens said.

The battlefield lifters of 12th CAB combined their training with the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment from Vilseck, and, for the first time in Germany, with the staff and an infantry company of the Georgian army’s 33rd Light Infantry Bn.

“The Georgian element is great because when we go downrange we will be working with coalition forces,” Edens said, adding that his crew chiefs’ responsibilities of getting troops on and off aircraft quickly and safely are compounded by the language barrier.

“It creates great training on attention to detail for our young leaders,” he said.

For the Georgians, the training held many new experiences.

“This is the first time that Georgian army forces have come to Germany,” said Maj. Mika Inkoshvili, 33rd Bn. commander.





Two CH-47 Chinooks of 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment leave a rain-slicked helipad in Hohenfels, Germany, during deployment validation.

“We have more sites for Military Operations on Urban Terrain (than in Georgia), more players – people who can act as civilians, role players who act as village elders, and a professional opposing force that understands how the enemy fights,” he said.

He emphasized that JMRC personnel work hard at making the training as challenging as possible.

“It is important to control what they see; it’s much like stage managing a movie, with the training unit as our audience. The harder it is here, the more adapted they will be to difficult situations downrange,” he said. “This is also important because 12th CAB are the guys the Georgians will be working with in Iraq.”

Willis said his O/Cs reported that the Georgians performed very well: “They

are doing the same things and making the same mistakes that American Soldiers make.”

“We are treating them the same as any American unit,” he said, “giving them the same challenges; to do anything less would be patronizing. We want to give them the best training we possibly can.”

Georgian army Sgt. Alexandre Karelidze said after his experiences at Hohenfels, he already understands some of what his unit will face downrange.

“This was good, important training,” he said. “The convoy training against ambushes was very difficult, you don’t know where the enemy is, or where they are firing from.”

“It was very interesting and realistic. We will soon be using this training in Iraq,” Inkoshvili said. “The main mission was completed without big mistakes.”

up to the task.

“Our Soldiers and their families are the greatest on this planet,” he said. “Moving, getting new equipment, knowing that at the end of that you are deploying to war – and they are still arriving at work every day with a smile and the eager question of ‘what are we going to do today, sir.’ Well, it just really pumps you up.”



Certified

Notified in late March that most of the 12th CAB was validated for deployment with several battalions in the final phases of their training, Edens said he is confident his troops are

Left: Air traffic control specialists with 3-58th Avn. set up their radar system during evaluation.

Right: Capt. Patrick Taylor, 2-159th Avn., Apache co-pilot, works a mission in the Longbow Crew Trainer.



In 2005 and 2006, the Southern European Task Force led Operation Enduring Freedom against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Recently, SETAF again demonstrated its ability to lead a joint multinational force during ...

SHARP FOCUS '07

“We designed this exercise so that the SETAF command staff would have to reach deep into their training to demonstrate an ability to work together with joint and multinational forces.”

**-Col. Eric Wagenaar
U.S. Army, Europe chief of exercises**

Story and photo by Sgt. Matthis Chiroux

Joint and multinational: these two words have become a mantra in today's Army. From the deserts and mountains of the Middle East to the jungles of the Philippines, the U.S. military is working closely with allied nations to eradicate terrorism.

In Europe, Soldiers deploy regularly and conduct training missions to ensure U.S. Army, Europe remains ready to supply coalition forces with command structures well-suited to lead multinational troops.

Exercise Sharp Focus 2007, held in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Jan. 22 to 30, was one such training mission. The computer-assisted command post exercise's primary goal was to recertify the Southern European Task Force as a Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters core.

“This is great hands-on training for me and my entire staff,” said Maj. Gen. Frank Helmick, SETAF commander. “We are experiencing a highly realistic simulation that is preparing us to respond to a wide range of scenarios.”

With the support and participation of more than 1,000 personnel from five countries and every branch of the U.S. military, the completion of SF '07 helps guarantee that SETAF will be fully

prepared to lead with the confidence of proficiency and the wisdom of experience, Helmick said.

SETAF led Combined Joint Task Force 76 in Afghanistan from February 2005 to March 2006. During that deployment, SETAF headed a multinational force that disarmed 58,000 insurgents, supported dozens of humanitarian relief operations and provided security for Afghanistan's first successful parliamentary elections in 30 years.

Regardless of past experience, though, a unit must be recertified every two and a half years to retain its CJTF core status, according to Col. Eric Wagenaar, USAREUR operations directorate's chief of exercises.

CJTFs are joint, multinational units used by the United States and its allies for crisis management and peacekeeping operations, according to the NATO Web site, www.nato.int. The core element, comprised of troops from a single unit, is augmented by individuals from various services and allied militaries to meet the requirements of a specific mission.

Leading up to the exercise, Task Force Sharp Focus Soldiers trained for almost six months, readying themselves to lead a multinational force in a simulated hos-

tile environment.

This mission is a complex task requiring great sensitivity, according to British army Lt. Col. David Warner, lead planner for SF '07.

“Building this exercise has taken about 18 months,” he said. “It began for the training audience last September with a week of academics in Vicenza, Italy.”

Task Force Sharp Focus members improved their understanding of joint operations during that first symposium, Warner said, adding that it's crucial for any unit preparing to lead a joint, multinational force to understand each nation's land, air and maritime capabilities.

Following the September training, SETAF Soldiers trained roughly one week monthly until the beginning of SF '07.

Warner and his team of planners began building the exercise scenario in June 2005. In total, they prepared more than 1,200 events for the simulated operation.

During the exercise, various training cells fed those events into the simulation, keeping the heat on Task Force Sharp Focus while the ground around their tents



froze during Grafenwoehr's first heavy snowfall of 2007.

Civil unrest, natural disasters and acts of terrorism are just a few of the simulated challenges the command post overcame, said Navy Lt. Corey Barker, the exercise public affairs officer. As the command post reacted, controllers gauged their performance and adjusted the simulation accordingly.

"We designed this exercise so that the SETAF command staff would have to reach deep into their training to demonstrate an ability to work together with joint and multinational forces, to quickly respond to any number of real-world events," Wagenaar said.

"So far, they've performed well above our expectations," he said.

The computer simulation used Joint Live Virtual Construction software to maximize the realism of the CPX, said Thomas Lasch, a JMTC training simulation specialist.

"JLVC provides a realistic training environment for commanders and staff members to conduct the military decision-making process," Lasch said. "The training audience is fighting just as they would be if the combat were real.

"They talk on the same radios, they

use the same computers, and the software provides high fidelity to the scenario, down to the individual Soldier or tactical vehicle."

The exercise's simulated tactical operations center served as office space for servicemembers with various levels of experience in joint and multinational operations. The need for total cooperation quickly became evident to one SETAF officer, who said because of SF '07 he felt ready to succeed in a joint, multinational environment.

"This is my first experience having to work through things like language barriers to complete a mission," said Capt. Scott Porter, SETAF's air operations officer. But he and his fellow participants worked around such barriers with patience and slow, simple English, he said, adding, "it helps we all have common backgrounds as military officers."

One British participant said he may be using skills learned from SF '07 in the near future.

"This is a good training tool for conducting operations in all current theaters," said British army Capt. Alexander Boissard from the United Kingdom's Battlefield Coordination and Deconfliction Command. "We could be doing

Above: SETAF's Sgt. Wesley Spaulding works with a British army captain to coordinate simulated firing missions during SF '07.

this type of an operation very shortly. There are already coalition operations in Afghanistan and Iraq."

SETAF concluded Exercise Sharp Focus officially certified as the core of a CJTF HQ, able to conduct full-spectrum operations in a hostile environment.

SETAF's success was driven by its ability to cooperate with joint, multinational partners, Warner said.

"There has been more interagency play here than I've seen in any previous certification exercise," Warner said. "That, in itself, has brought enormous education to the task force. There's no doubt in my mind that the experience they've had through this whole process has raised their standard of capability in the joint and world arenas."

With this certification complete, Wagenaar said, USAREUR has ensured that next time it's called to provide a CJTF HQ, SETAF will be able to respond with all the professionalism of first-class Soldiers, trained and ready to accomplish any mission, anywhere.



'The 7th Army Reserve Command will become a Civil Support Command'

– Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz

In February, Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, chief of the U.S. Army Reserve, visited Heidelberg, Germany, to speak with 7th Army Reserve Command Soldiers about the future of their unit. During his visit, Stultz sat down with *EURArmy* to discuss what U.S. Army, Europe can expect from the 7th ARCOM after their transformation is complete.

After transforming, what will the 7th ARCOM look like?

The 7th ARCOM will become a Civil Support Command.

In talking with Gen. (David) McKiernan, one of the things he's said he needs is a Civil Support Command with consequence management capabilities.

Since 95 percent of the Army's civil affairs capabilities reside in the Army Reserve, he's looking for us to be able to grow that support for him.

Why would having a CSC stationed in Europe be beneficial to USAREUR?

It means you've got another operational force in theater.

They're going to be an operational force with full-time civil support teams trained, ready and available within an hour's notice.

When a humanitarian crisis occurs, you want the ability to respond immediately.

If we can reside that

capability in the 7th ARCOM, we can effectively cover the theater. So next time something like an earthquake in Pakistan occurs, that we need to provide humanitarian support for, we can send one specialized unit, rather than having to distract other forces who need to be focusing on combat missions.

Will the 7th ARCOM be supporting the new Africa Command?

Yes, and I think it's a tremendous opportunity for us because of the skill sets that we possess. If you look at what's going on in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's easy to understand why civil affairs is so valuable. Anywhere you look at the role civil affairs teams are playing, the good is evident. They're getting out with the locals, developing that relationship, helping get their communities up and running. Civil affairs guys are partnering with engineers to go into a community and drill a well, then they set up a school or a hospital. This all builds goodwill with the people.

Now, look at the opportunity you have in Africa. This is not a military operation, this is a civil operation, so getting those civil affairs forces into that continent and working with the locals to turn things around there, what a tremendous boon that would be.

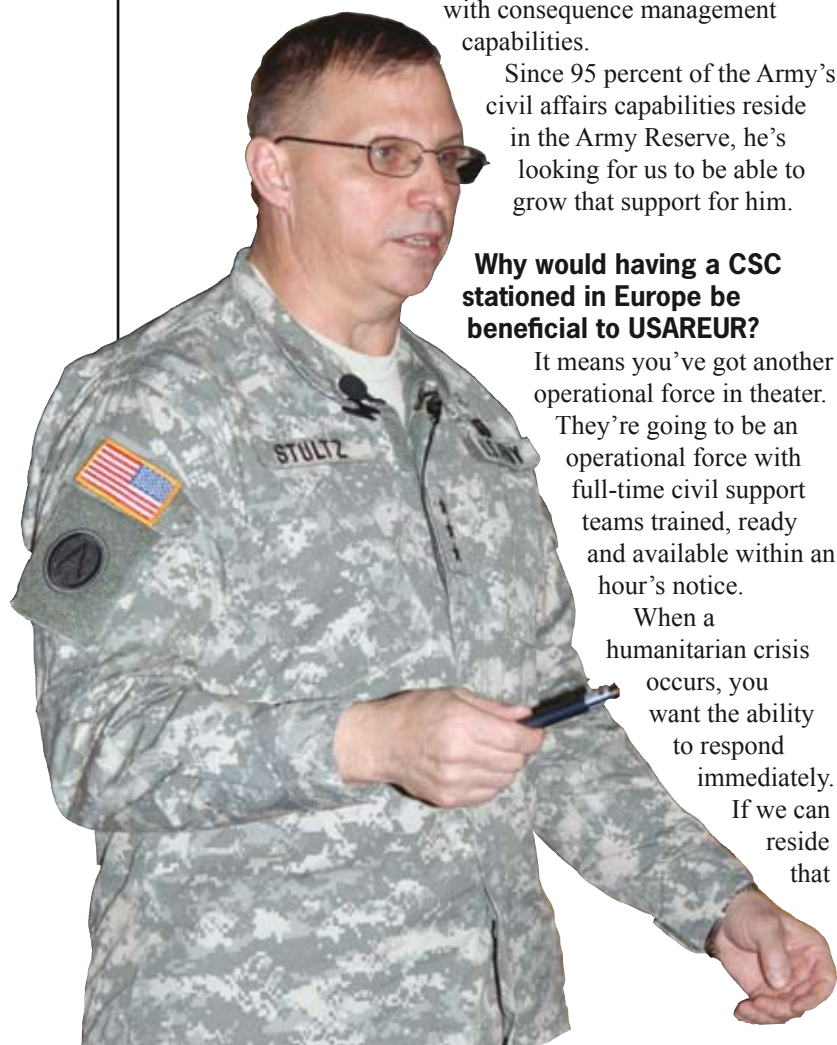
What are some other missions the 7th ARCOM may be responsible for?

The 7th ARCOM will continue to provide logistical augmentation to the 7th Army and the 21st Theater Support Command. It's going to also be providing some training support to the Joint Multinational Training Command.

Will mobile training teams continue to be a part of the 7th ARCOM?

The 7th ARCOM will have to have mobile training teams. One of the core competencies we have in the Army Reserve is trainers. Our forces are populated by people who are coaches, teachers and instructors. They are skilled and have been taught how to train others. We should capitalize on that.

As we're seeing right now, Soldiers from our training divisions are deploying and doing foreign army training for the Iraqi army and the Afghan army. We need to make more use of that here, in theater, where we have security cooperation agreements. We can use some of



our trainers to help build foreign armies here on the European continent.

When will 7th ARCOM transformation be complete?

Our target date is 2009, to have everything in place to go fully operational.

You have said the Army Reserve is working toward a one-year-in-five deployment schedule for reserve forces. When will that goal be realized?

We have developed a five-year Army Force Generation model, where you deploy for one year, and you're back four years before you're called up again. Right now, we're turning at about a three-year cycle. To get to the five-year model, we have to increase the capability in both the active and the reserve force. Then we've got to figure out how to get more efficient.

Modularity is part of the answer and part of the answer is we have to grow the force.

The challenge we've got right now is, the Army Reserve is where you keep most of your combat support and service support assets. Because of the demand in the Southwest Asian theater, the demand for combat support and service support has not slowed down. So, what the theater needs is more than what we've got if we go by the five-year cycle.

How will the five-year cycle work in peacetime?

One of the things I've said in this whole ARFORGEN cycle is if the war in Iraq were to stop tomorrow, I don't want to stop the ARFORGEN cycle. I want to be able to tell a Soldier in the Army Reserve about every five years, you're going to go somewhere. You may end up going to Romania or Hungary or Korea to support some kind of theater security cooperation agreement we've got and be a mobile trainer in their military formations.

I think that's a recruiting incentive. A Soldier wants that adventure to broaden his experiences.

What are the advantages for reservists serving in Europe?

It's a cultural experience that you can't replicate on the (continental United States) side of the Army. The ability to serve in the Army Reserve on the European continent is a great opportunity. A Soldier can get a taste of adventure. There is so much to see and do and learn.

Also, you have a chance to work very closely with multinational partners. Almost everything a Soldier does here has a chance to improve the working relationships between the U.S. and our local allies.

But, it's an exciting time to be in the Army Reserves, period.

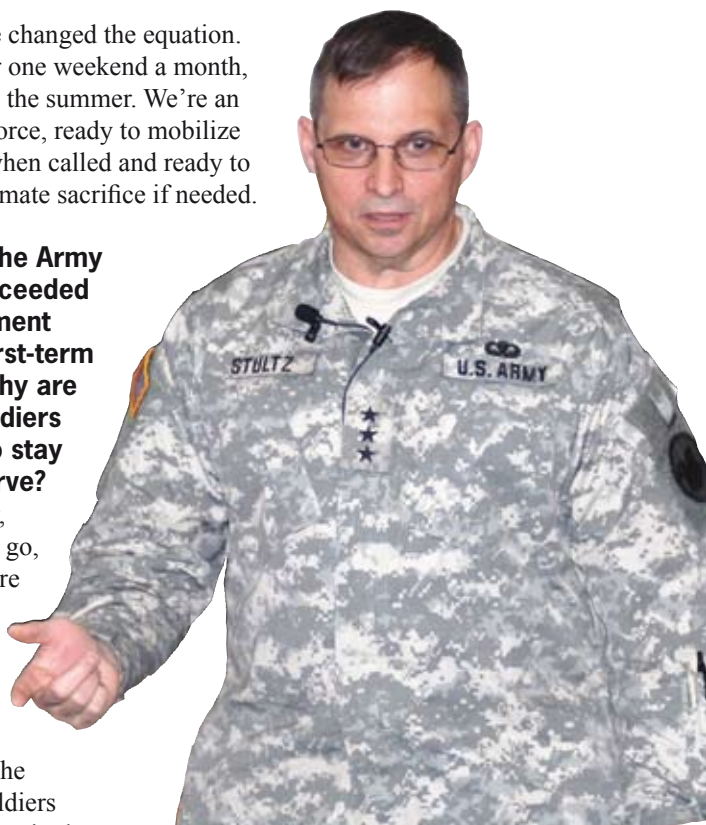
Congress has awoken to the fact that we can no longer treat the Army Reserve and National Guard as a strategic, supplementary force. We're part of the operational force. We're getting upwards of \$10 billion through fiscal year 2013 programmed for equipment. That's huge.

But we've changed the equation. It's no longer one weekend a month, two weeks in the summer. We're an operational force, ready to mobilize and deploy when called and ready to make the ultimate sacrifice if needed.

Last year, the Army Reserve exceeded its reenlistment goals for first-term Soldiers. Why are reserve Soldiers choosing to stay Army Reserve?

You know, everywhere I go, I look at where I'm at. I'm chief of the Army Reserve, but I am humbled by the quality of Soldiers that are serving in the Army Reserve. The professionalism, the quality of the individual, the integrity. We have the best quality Army Reserve we've ever had.

Why are they staying? They're proud of what they're doing. Reserve Soldiers are accomplishing missions never before asked of them, and they're doing a world of good to a world of people that need their help. And again, with the increase of missions in Africa inevitable as the Africa Command stands up, our Soldiers are eager to continue doing the good they already do.



RESERVE SOLDIERS IN EUROPE

"All Ready, Already Here"

- 23 Units
- 900 Soldiers
- Soldiers currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom
- Engaging allies through training partnerships.
- Trained more than 2,500 combat lifesavers
- Transforming to a Civil Support Command
- Linguistic capabilities in 20 languages
- Completed missions in more than 40 countries



Afghanistan 101: Handshakes hand grenades



Polish prequel to NATO mission

Story and photos by Sgt. Aimee Millham

When the Taliban insurgency in southern Afghanistan grew deadlier, NATO generals in September requested 2,500 more troops for missions in the region.

Poland was the first to respond.

"In support of democracy, we offer ourselves to be part of this mission," Polish Minister of Defense Radek Sikorski said during a December visit to the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, where half of the Polish contingent trained for their deployment in March.

The fifth-highest troop contributor to the multinational force in Iraq, Poland offered nearly 1,000 troops to the United Nations-mandated and NATO-led mission, which aims to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan.

It is the country's first-ever Afghanistan deployment. Polish troops will serve as part of the International Security Assistance Force, a U.N.-mandated mission involving some 32,000 troops from 37 countries.

For the task, the Poles trained under the tutelage of multinational observer/controller teams in an environment as diverse as their mission – JMRC, U.S. Army, Europe's combat training center.

"It's an opportunity to learn another country's TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures), and vice versa," said Maj. Eric Strong, a JMRC O/C. A theme of the Poles' predeployment training, U.S. and Polish troops learning from one another, followed the old adage "train as you fight."

"We get to see how a different Army operates – an Army we work with in Iraq," Strong said. "It's interoperability, and it's how it's going to be in Afghanistan."

A key part of training was learning how to properly identify the enemy and being able to discern whether to attack or simply talk things through peaceably.

"Here you have to think about it; you can't just kill at will," said Polish Lt. Michael Holub, an O/C, describing how realistic the training at JMRC is compared to other less realistic training where the target is clearly identified and the Soldier does not

have to decide whether or not to attack.

"In real life, there's no announcement saying 'the bad guys are here, attack,'" said Sgt. 1st Class Tony Holcomb, a JMRC trainer.

While early in the training Polish troops were very eager to engage – or "a bit trigger-happy" as JMRC trainer Sgt. 1st Class Harold Randolph put it – by the end they became more discerning.

"They followed what they learned," he said.

The Polish troops were taught to talk to locals and explain the reason for a military presence in their town. This is a well-known lesson among the top leadership in the Polish military. "We respect that we are only guests," Sikorski said at a press conference during his December visit to JMRC. "When we are preparing our troops we want to teach them to show that they are there to help."

In one training scenario that called for a town raid in search of a Taliban member, one civilian on the battlefield played the role of town elder, or mullah, who was displeased about his town being "invaded."

During the second go at this scenario, and as they were taught, the highest ranking person in the Polish squad explained his troops' mission in the elder's town, as the rest of the squad

"In real life, there's no announcement, saying 'the bad guys are here, attack'"

– Sgt. 1st Class Tony Holcomb, JMRC



Polish troops train at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center before their NATO-led deployment to Afghanistan.



A Polish Soldier explains his squad's mission – searching for a Taliban insurgent – to a civilian on the battlefield acting as town elder.

stood ready to conduct its cordon-and-search procedures.

The fact that 90 percent of the JMRC trainers are combat veterans allows for these specifics in training, Strong said, adding “we can provide nuances taken from Afghanistan.”

Polish Capt. Marcin Gil, an O/C, added that much of the

trainers at the site. These trainers have attended the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Warrior Leader Course in Grafenwoehr, Germany. While the training marked the first time one non-U.S. military trained at JMRC without other partners joining in, U.S.-Polish training has history. Aside from the Polish WLC graduates, eight Polish rotations to Iraq have been trained by U.S. forces at JMRC.

In those eight rotations the Polish military has also learned lessons of its own, which it will apply during this deployment.

“We will intervene all over Afghanistan, despite where we are based there,” Sikorski said. “It's a lesson we learned from Multinational Corps – Iraq.”

According to U.S. Army, Europe's commander, the Polish troops are well-prepared to take on this broader scope of responsibility.

“The assessment from the trainers on the ground has been that the Polish troops are very aggressive and well-trained,” Gen. David D. McKiernan said during the Sikorski visit.

After the training at JMRC, which also included live-fire exercises and counter-improvised explosive device training, the troops returned to Poland for more predeployment training to be fully prepared for the March deployment.

“We will be part of convincing everyone that wherever NATO goes it can fulfill the mission,” Sikorski said.



A Polish sniper position himself during a cordon-and-search exercise at one of JMRC's mock villages.

knowledge gained from training with U.S. troops comes from their standard operating procedures. “The U.S. has an SOP for everything,” he said, laughing.

Besides the Polish O/Cs – JMRC trains and employs them regularly – there were also more than 100 Polish



1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, "The Rock," 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

A Tour of Duty

Story and photos by Gary L. Kieffer

During the past few years, many units in U.S. Army, Europe have undergone major transformation. As part of USAREUR's transition to a modularized force structure, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team has added four battalions to its ranks.



Although headquartered south of the Alps, the unit has Soldiers spread across two countries and three bases: Vicenza, Italy; and Bamberg and Schweinfurt, Germany.

Most of these Soldiers are slated to deploy to Afghanistan in the coming months. The 173rd will be USAREUR's first fully modularized brigade combat team to deploy.

EURArmy magazine will follow the unit's leaders along with 10 Soldiers from 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd (Airborne) Infantry Regiment – known as the Rock – during training, deployment and reintegration.

This first segment of the series introduces the major participants.

The Unit

While training in February for deployment later in 2007, the 173rd ABCT received a change of orders, switching their upcoming mission from Iraq to Afghanistan.

However, this had little effect on the unit.

"We wisely trained on the basic building blocks for any adjustment to our mission," said Col. Charles A. Preysler, 173rd ABCT commander.

The major changes in training were met by a fine-tuning, with more emphasis on foot patrols in rural and mountainous areas and less on mounted urban operations, Preysler said.

Besides the mission change, the deployment timetable has accelerated. Pressure is on staff members and leaders to prepare Soldiers for departure.

"We had self-imposed deadlines that are not far off from what we anticipated our actual deployment date will be," Preysler said.

"The timetable is compressed, but the paratroopers are experienced professionals and have responded to the time crunch. Bottom line, we will deploy on time and to standard," he said.

This will be the 173rd's second Afghanistan deployment. Their mission will be to support the International Security Assistance Force, the U.N.-mandated joint and multinational military mission supporting the government of Afghanistan.

"We are there to work with the Afghan Security Forces and our coalition partners," Preysler said. "Although every deployment is different, and a lot of our Soldiers are new, the principles are the same."

The 173rd ABCT commander said the biggest change will be location.

"This is a different fight and operation, and there are obvious changes we have to make," Preysler said.

"We do have a lot of experience still in the brigade," he continued. "I am absolutely confident the brigade will be ready to go on time, with all the required personnel and proper equipment to accomplish any mission given to us."

The Men



Preysler

Col. Charles Preysler

- 47 years old, from Michigan.
- Commander, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team
- 11A-Infantry Branch.

• 25 years of service, three years with the brigade.

• Previously stationed at forts Benning, Ga.; Lewis, Wash.; Leavenworth, Kan.; Bragg, N.C.; Campbell, Ky.; and in Hawaii and South Korea.

• Bachelor's in political science, two master's and a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, the School for Advanced Military Studies and the Naval War College.

• Married with a son and a daughter.

Lt. Col. William B. (Bill) Ostlund

- 41 years old, from Omaha, Neb.
- Commander, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment, 'The Rock'

• 11A-Infantry Branch.

• 24 years of service, including six years as an enlisted Soldier, four years with the brigade, nine months with the battalion.

• Previously stationed at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.; Fort Campbell, Ky.; and in South Korea.

• Bachelor's in political science, master's from Tuft's School of Law and Diplomacy, and a doctoral candidate.

• Married with two sons and another "inbound" in May.

"Our unit has the highest standards. We have a storied history. Our mantra is to move quickly, with limited information, and accomplish the mission."



Ostlund



Meyers

Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley K. Meyers

- 44 years old, from Fayetteville, N.C.
- 00Z-Command Sergeant Major
- Battalion command sergeant major, 2-503rd AIR

• 23 years of service, with nearly two years in the brigade.

• Previously stationed at forts Bragg, N.C.; Richardson, Alaska; Hunter Army Airfield; Benning, Ga.; and Bliss, Texas.

• High school diploma, some college.

• Married.

"We have a large portion of our leadership that is experienced in foreign operations. Although nearly 60 percent of our Soldiers are turn-overs, they are led by seasoned veterans."

"We focused on the basics: battle drills and executing jumps. Paratroopers adapt easier to situations; they have to by nature."

Capt. Daniel (Dan) Kearny

- 27 years old, from Columbus, Ga.
- Commander, Battle Company, 2-503rd AIR

• 11A-Infantry Branch.

• Five years of service, nine months with the brigade, three months with the battalion.

• Previously stationed at forts Lewis, Wash., and Benning, Ga.

• Bachelor's in business administration.

• Married.

"We are training more for long-range engagements now that we are headed to Afghanistan."

"But even with the additional training, we are making sure that the Soldiers have time with their families. We are also pushing hard on the Family Readiness Group so that families are taken care of while we are deployed."



Kearny



Piosa

1st Lt. Matthew Piosa

- 24 years old, from Leighton, Pa.
- 2nd Platoon Leader, Co. B.
- 11A-Infantry Branch.

• One and a half years of service, 10

months with the brigade.

• Graduate of U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

• Single.

"We have basically had to rebuild the platoon from scratch. But we are lucky to have a strong NCO corps and some experienced players that are the key-stones from our original platoon."

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Patterson

- 29 years old, from New Concord, Ohio.
- Platoon sergeant, 2nd Platoon, Battle Company.
- 11B-Infantryman.
- Ten and a half years of military service, five years with the brigade.
- Previously stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.
- High school diploma.
- Single.

"Iraq and Afghanistan are two completely different places. Different cultures entirely. In Afghanistan, you might be 80 clicks from the main base.

"But we are trained to fight wherever they send us."



Patterson

Sgt. McKelly Rentas-Salome

- 31 years old, from Villalba, Puerto Rico.
- A-Team leader
- 11B-Infantryman
- Four years of service with two years in the brigade.
- Previously stationed at Fort Drum, N.Y.
- High school diploma, two years of college.
- Married with two children.

"This is my third time around to go to Afghanistan. My son is seven years old now. He understands things more than before, so he's having a harder time with me going this time around."



Rentas-Salome

- Previously stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.
- High school diploma, one year of college.
- Single.

"When I was younger, I always saw myself in the Army. I joined up to make a difference. This is where I need to be."



Cunningham



Branscum

Staff Sgt. Gary Branscum

- 34 years old, from Bakersfield, Calif.
- Squad leader, 1st Squad.
- 11B-Infantryman.
- 15 years of service, six months with the brigade.

- Previously stationed at forts Benning, Ga.; Lewis, Wash.; Myers and Lee, Va.; and in South Korea.
- High school diploma, some college.
- Married with one daughter.

"Train. Train. Train. We are learning from the guys who have already been down range. Little tricks that help us all out. That's how we get our Soldiers ready for the deployment."



Correy

Spec. Clyde Correy

- 22 years old, from Norman, Mass.
- Team leader.
- 11B-Infantryman.
- Just over three years of service with just over two and a half years in the brigade.

- High school diploma.
- Single.

"Right now I am not in a relationship, so that's a good thing with me deploying to Afghanistan."

"This is my second time in country, so it will be easier for me that way too."

Sgt. Kevin Bullock

- 24 years old, from Turlock, Calif.
- Team leader.
- 11B-Infantryman.
- Four and a half years of service, new to the unit.
- Previously stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky.
- High school diploma, some college.
- Engaged.

"I'd much rather be deployed than sit in garrison. This is what I signed up to do. To defend my country."

"My fiancée is a Soldier, too, so she knows what I am going through. In fact, she's also deploying with her unit."



Bullock

Spec. Joel Hajar

- 24 years old, from Los Angeles, Calif.
- Team leader, designated sniper.
- 11B-Infantryman
- Just over three years of service, with 14 months in the unit.
- Previously stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.
- Associate's degree.
- Single.

"We've had a whirlwind of changes. Our platoon was down to 26 guys. Now we are back to full strength. But I feel like a new guy again, since I just returned from sniper and ranger schools."

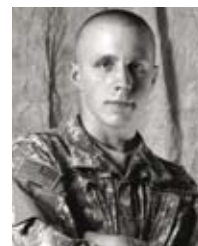


Hajar

Pvt. Jason Monroe

- 19 years old, from Milwaukee, Wis.
- Grenadier.
- 11B-Infantryman.
- Eight months in service with three months in the unit.
- Previously stationed at Fort Benning, Ga.
- High school diploma.
- Single.

"I was living at home, working at McDonald's. Now I am headed to Afghanistan. There's no time for fishing."



Monroe

Two additional Soldiers will be included in future stories: 1st. Sgt. LaMonta Caldwell and Pfc. Luke Nevala.





It Will Be Done:



**One year later,
Task Force Victory,
led by headquarters,
V Corps, returns home after
its second tour leading the
coalition struggle to bring
peace and stability to the
people of Iraq**

**Story by Lt. Col. Mark Wright
V Corps Public Affairs Office**

Spc. Charles Stender, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, conducts a joint patrol with Iraqi police in Tal Afar, Iraq, May 17. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey, 1st Combat Camera Squadron



Photo by Air Force Tech Sgt. Jeremy Lock, 1st Combat Camera Squadron

U.S. Marines and Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, take cover from small-arms fire while investigating a suicide car bomb explosion in Ramadi, Iraq, Aug. 10. The battalion was assigned to the 1st BCT.

In March 2003, V Corps led the assault on the late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and his regime.

In just 16 days, forces under corps command captured Baghdad while Saddam fled. V Corps stayed on as the security provider for the Coalition Provisional Authority that led the rebuilding of Iraq in the first year after Saddam was deposed. Corps units redeployed to Germany in the summer of 2004.

Months later, V Corps headquarters and eight of the Corps' major subordinate units — more than 11,000 Soldiers and civilian employees — were alerted to deploy back to Iraq in January 2006. The corps participated in three exercises to prepare for this deployment: Victory Focus, Urgent Victory and Unified Endeavor.

To prepare their Soldiers, units engaged in training on basic and advanced individual fighting skills based on scenarios experienced by coalition forces in Iraq.

In late 2005, V Corps units began deploying to Iraq under the designation Task Force Victory. The corps' 130th Engineer Brigade, 3rd Corps Support Command and other units sent their heavy equipment and material by sea. Soldiers deployed to Kuwait and joined up with their vehicles and equipment before moving into their areas of responsibility in Iraq. In January, corps headquarters, commanded by Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, deployed to Baghdad. Its mission: oversee the day-to-day operations of 150,000 coalition troops serving under Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

V Corps units were spread across Iraq. The 1st Armored Division's 2nd Brigade was sent to Kuwait as a ready reserve force, but later moved into Iraq to help quell sectarian violence. The division's 1st Brigade deployed to Tal Afar

Right: Soldiers from Task Force Victory's 130th Engineer Brigade work under the cover of night to repair potholes caused by roadside bombs March 3, 2006.



Photo by Spec. Sean Finch, V Corps PAO



in northern Iraq and later moved to Ramadi.

The 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division also first deployed into Kuwait and then moved into Baghdad. The corps' 22nd Signal, 130th Engineer, 30th Medical and 205th Military Intelligence brigades were headquartered in Baghdad. These units also had elements spread across most of the country to fulfill their missions.

The 3rd COSCOM was based at Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Balad, with units in several locations in Iraq to provide logistical support.

Insurgent forces dealt the cause of stability in Iraq a blow Feb. 22, 2005, when two bombs were detonated in Samarra's Al Askari Mosque (also known as the Golden Mosque).

Outraged, Shiite militants across Iraq retaliated by killing Sunnis and attacking their mosques. Religious leaders on both sides called for calm, but the stage was set for a pattern of retaliation and counter-retaliation among Iraq's ethnic and religious sects.

Despite increasing violence, Iraqi democracy moved forward. Iraqis established their first freely elected government since 1963. Their newly elected Council of Representatives first met on March 16, 2006. However, sectarian violence continued to escalate, particularly in Baghdad. The new government sought a prime minister acceptable to the major Iraqi political factions. The government chose Nouri al-Maliki, deputy leader of the Islamic Dawa Party, as prime minister. Jalal Talibani became president.

The coalition's multi-year search for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, ended with his death in early June, severely disrupting his organization's operations in Iraq.

Meanwhile, conditions in Ramadi steadily deteriorated, and MNC-I forces focused their efforts on ending the insurgency and bringing back former residents chased away by the fighting. The 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade and additional Iraqi troops were brought in to clear

U.S. Navy explosive ordnance disposal technician Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Harstead and Soldiers from the 1st AD conduct an air assault mission near Shaykh Ibrahim Ridge, Iraq.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Allmon, 1st Combat Camera Squadron

insurgents from the city.

Iraqi police returned to the city to provide security. They assumed full provincial Iraqi control of Muthanna province July 12, 2006—the first province to be formally returned to Iraqi government authority.

Gen. George Casey, the commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq, hailed it as a milestone in Iraq's capability to govern and protect itself as a "sovereign nation."

As these events occurred, the sectarian violence steadily increased and became more deadly.

By the summer of 2006, sectarian aggression had become a serious obstacle to the country's progress.

Once again, coalition forces acting in concert with the Iraqi government stepped in to quell the escalating bloodshed in Baghdad. Operation Together Forward was the answer. Reinforced with troops from the 1st Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions' 2nd Brigades, other allied forces from across Iraq and thousands of Iraqi troops, coalition forces began a series of operations in targeted Baghdad neighborhoods.

The objective was to clear each neighborhood of insurgent and terrorist elements, hold it with Iraqi police forces, rebuild its infrastructure and reestablish basic services in the hope of providing a safe environment for residents to resume their lives.

During V Corps' 2006 tenure as the MNC-I command element, Iraq made strides forward as MNC-I united with a wide array of agencies and contractors to build government capacity, improve quality of life and set a course for a better future for the country.

Headquarters, V Corps passed its authority over the MNC-I mission to the Army's III Corps Dec. 14.

The majority of V Corps' units had redeployed by that point, although elements of 1st Infantry Division are in the final phases of their missions in Iraq as this issue goes to press.

(Left-right) Spc. Stephen Hancock, Sgt. Jeremy English and Spc. Brandon Hawn, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, launch a round from their 120mm mortar tube during training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait in 2006.



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Keith DeVinney, Combat Camera Group Pacific

Capt. Michael Baka, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, high-fives a local child during a joint patrol in Baghdad during Operation Together Forward Aug. 29.



Photo by 1st Lt. Kenneth Jordan, HHIC, 2-6th Infantry Regiment



Staff Sgt. Jesse Linen, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, looks on as an Iraqi Soldier fires a .50-caliber machine gun during joint weapons training in Tal Afar, Iraq, May 18.



Under the concealment of smoke, Soldiers from Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, move to their next objective while conducting an early morning raid, looking for weapon caches, on a local school and several houses in the Tameem district of Ramadi.

**“For all this and more,
I say thank you
to Lt. Gen. Chiarelli and
V Corps for their help in
first freeing our nation
from Saddam Hussein
and then in assisting our
new democracy in seating
its first government.”**

— excerpt from a letter addressed to Lt. Gen. Chiarelli and V Corps from Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan Majeed, commander, Iraqi Ground Forces Command

Citizen Soldiers:

strengthening bonds with partner armies

By Dave Melancon

During Exercise Rising Phalanx in Macedonia last September, Staff Sgt. Michael Cutter, Vermont Army National Guard, saw Macedonian military policemen firing AK-47 assault rifles instead of heavier caliber machine guns from their Humvees.

"I was told that they had no way to mount machine guns on their vehicles," said Cutter, who works for an armaments manufacturer in his civilian life.

"I mentioned that I could build a mount if they would give me an hour with a vehicle, a gun and some follow-up time in a machine shop. Three hours later, the MPs had two fully functional prototypes that can be replicated at minimal cost with assets on hand."

After the mounts were installed, Cutter and the MPs joined the rest of the policemen on the training lanes. Manning their newly armed vehicles, the Macedonians learned how to provide maneuver support for dismounted troops from other Vermont guardsmen.

In a written report submitted after the exercise, Lt. Col Daniel Pipes, the exercise's director, said Cutter's actions epitomized the resourcefulness his Soldiers shared with the Macedonians.

Bringing wartime operational and civilian skills to the training area is a hall-

mark of the U.S. Army National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program exercises, Pipes wrote.

"Much of this occurred intuitively, as it does when our Soldiers deploy and immediately begin improving their positions using materials on hand," he continued. "The Macedonian Soldiers were quick to embrace this daily demonstration of initiative to improve every lane and were receptive to follow-on classes after hours."

The exercise was designed to share information on skills commonly used by U.S. and Macedonian Soldiers who have deployed to the Global War on Terrorism areas of operation, he said. Training lanes covered convoy tactics, checkpoints, search procedures and urban operations.

The 22-Soldier team was handpicked from Vermont's best qualified instructors and consisted of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom veterans, Pipes said.

Operation Rising Phalanx was one of six partnership exercises completed in Europe last year, said Maj. Anthony Adrian, U.S. Army, Europe exercise planning section.

This year's scheduled European partnership exercises include: Poland/Illinois in May; Slovakia/Indiana, Moldova/North Carolina, Latvia/Michigan and Croatia/Minnesota in June; Albania/New

Jersey and Bulgaria/Tennessee in July; and Slovenia/Colorado in September.

Worldwide, the program pairs U.S. Army National Guard units with developing nations' armies.

"In Europe, they have the additional opportunity to work with those nations that are seeking NATO accession, training their military forces to meet NATO certification requirements," Adrian said.

The U.S. National Guard Bureau administers the program, with most of the planning occurring directly between state units and host countries.

With oversight from U.S. European Command, USAREUR's operations section helps Guard units and their hosts prepare official agreements, force protection and medical emergency plans. Exercises also receive support from the host country's U.S. embassy team.

The program officially began in 1993 as a way for the United States to support allies in Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, the Pacific Rim and Africa.

The program traces its unofficial origins to a year earlier, when Latvia sought U.S. help in developing a defense force based on the Guard's "Citizen Soldier" model of an all-volunteer professional military force that supports its home state and the country.

The Michigan ANG volunteered to partner with Latvia. Shortly afterward, Estonia teamed with Maryland while Lithuania and Pennsylvania became partners, according to the bureau's Web site.

While the main goal of the program is tactical information exchange among Soldiers, program objectives also include demonstrating the military's role and subordinate standing in a democracy, and exemplifying U.S. humanitarian and democratic values.

The guardsmen learn how to overcome communications barriers, operate with other nations' forces, and share doctrine, tactical skills and fieldcraft with the host-nation troops.

"The Vermont Soldiers gained invaluable training from their Macedonian counterparts on different types of equipment and familiarized themselves with foreign military tactics," said Brian Shott, U.S. Embassy, Macedonia spokesman. "As a result, they are better pre-



Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Rodriguez, VTARNG instructor, coaches a Macedonian military policeman during marksmanship training during exercise Rising Phalanx in Macedonia last September.

Vermont Army National Guard

pared for future multinational deployments, because they now better understand equipment differences and how to coordinate with Soldiers who have been trained in a different environment.”

Program funding comes from a variety of sources, Adrian said. The states pay their Soldiers’ salaries, with EUCOM covering international travel and per diem expenses. Host nations provide ground transportation, security, billeting and other support.

“Levels of support provided by the host nation at no cost to the U.S. government vary considerably by country and event, based on specific agreements for each event,” he said.

Units share skills, war-fighting and peacekeeping operational experiences, tactics, techniques and procedures as Soldiers bring knowledge gained from missions to Iraq, Afghanistan and other trouble spots.

Host-country Soldiers, many emerging from officer-centric leadership styles, learn about an NCO’s role in planning and executing missions. Often, working with Guard sergeants is one of the country’s first steps toward establishing an NCO corps.

In addition to military-to-military exercises, the program also includes military-to-civilian exchanges that encourage development of civil and military support structures, youth and counter-drug programs and support for homeland defense initiatives.

There are also civilian-to-civilian programs consisting of community leader, scholar and professional exchanges.

While the Macedonian operation focused on Soldier skills, the results serve the entire country, Shott said.

“Rewards for both sides included interacting across linguistic and cultural boundaries with colleagues who share the same values of teamwork, skill and dedication in their commitment to the Global War On Terrorism,” Shott said.

Training together strengthened trust and cooperation between the two countries’ armies, he said. Planning is underway for the next exercise, scheduled for 2008.

“Macedonia is a staunch ally. We look



Vermont Army National Guard

Soldiers from the Vermont Army National Guard and Macedonian Army practice dismounted infantry drills during Exercise Rising Phalanx at the Krivolak Training Area in September.

forward to an even richer relationship in the future,” Shott said.

“The single greatest success that I saw during the operation was the growth in confidence of the Macedonian NCO,” said Sgt. 1st Class William Duncan, a scout platoon sergeant, with the Vermont Army National Guard’s 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment.

“At the end of the urban assault lane, the Macedonian NCO was easily identified among other Soldiers and was taking charge of his element and making decisions that positively influenced the

outcome of scenarios,” he said.

Macedonian NCO leaders understood their commanding officers’ intent, ensuring the mission was completed without further instructions, he said.

“This event exceeded our expectations on all fronts. Our overriding impression is that Macedonian Soldiers are serious about learning skills necessary to survive and win when performing some of the common tasks associated with the GWOT,” Pipes wrote, concluding his report. “As their army transforms, they will become more valued partners.”



Vermont Army National Guard

Staff Sgt. Michael Cutter, Vermont Army National Guard, tests a new machine gun mount with a Macedonian military policeman.

'Toujours Pret'

Strykers 'Always Ready' to travel

By Dave Melancon

It has been a long road march from the port of Bremerhaven, Germany, to the rain-drenched mud of Hohenfels, Germany, for the 1st Armored Division's 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

Less than a year after relocating its Soldiers, families and equipment from Fort Lewis, Wash., the regiment has spent the fall and winter settling into its new U.S. Army, Europe home in Vilseck, Germany, establishing motor pools and support facilities, and most importantly, training for a variety of missions.

"Our first major success was re-stationing the regiment from Fort Lewis to Vilseck," said the regiment's commanding officer, Col. John S. RisCassi. "We moved approximately

5,500 Soldiers and family members, nearly 600 cats and dogs, 1,500 pieces of tactical equipment including about 300 Stryker vehicles, and approximately 1,800 privately owned vehicles."

RisCassi said the regiment's next major successes took place in the field and in unit tactical operations headquarters.

"During Operation Dragoon Steel last fall, we certified every platoon in the regiment as trained and ready for combat," he said.

The word dragoon stems from a flame-belching short musket, called the dragon, used in the 16th and 17th centuries. Over time, the term has evolved as a term for an infantryman who fights on foot but rides to battle.

Additionally, two squadrons conducted the regiment's first rotations at the Joint

Multinational Training Command's combat training centers in Hohenfels.

While the squadrons were earning their certifications in "The Box" at Hohenfels, the regiment's staff joined their 1st AD counterparts during the Iron Strike command post exercise.

Following the CPX, the regiment completed Operation Dragoon Thunder, completing its remaining unit certifications. Additionally, dismounted infantry from the 2nd SCR climbed into a Blackhawk helicopter belonging to the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade for a series of air assault missions during the Operation Iraqi Freedom-bound aviation unit's mission readiness training exercises in March.

Each exercise was treated as a real-world mission, said Maj. Omar Jones, the regiment's operations officer.

"We encouraged all squadrons to plan, prepare and execute movements from Vilseck as tactical deployment exercises before, during and after their JMTC rotations," he said.

The regiment continues to strengthen Soldier-to-Soldier and unit-to-unit bonds with the neighboring German army's 12th Panzer Brigade and German army noncommissioned officers' academy in Weiden.

During Exercise Steinwald 2007, organized and conducted by the German NCO academy, 2nd SCR dragoons joined with their German and Swiss army counterparts in the community of Neusorg for dismounted infantry drills in March.

While most of the exercises and training took place close to their home station, the Army's oldest continuously serving cavalry regiment will take part in missions that will take them deeper into Europe.

The regiment sent a team of officers and NCOs to recon training areas in February, for the first-ever U.S. unit rotation under the newly established Joint Task Force-East.

In February, the Army announced that brigade-sized units based in the United States will deploy to Bulgaria and Romania for six month stints.

Establishment of a permanent, but austere, headquarters facility is



Photo courtesy of Ralph Zwilling

A formation of Strykers convoys through eastern Bavaria en route to the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels.



A sniper team draws a bead on a target during training exercises at Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, in February.

scheduled to begin this year in Romania and in Bulgaria in 2008. Army, Navy, Air Force and allied personnel will staff the JTF-E headquarters.

Elements of 2nd SCR's 1st Squadron are scheduled to be the first U.S. units to deploy to JTF-East in June for operations with the Bulgarian and Romanian armies.

During the exercise, the regiment will conduct a "proof of principle" rotation with Romanian and Bulgarian forces while conducting training events in both countries, Jones said.

"JTF-East offers the rotational squadron unprecedented opportunities to increase interoperability with other services and multi-national partners and prepare for coalition operations," he said.

In addition to the exercises happening in Bulgaria and Romania, the unit plans to test its overall home station deployment readiness, he said. Some of the tasks include unit recall procedures, family support services, personal vehicle storage, barracks close-out plans, tactical vehicle load planning, administrative, medical and dental preparedness, Jones said.

During Exercise Dragoon Lightening, scheduled for May and June, the regiment will return to Grafenwoehr's ranges for gunnery training. During the two-month-long exercise, Soldiers, fire teams, squads and platoons will qualify with individual and crew-served weapons. They will also ensure that they are up to standards with Stryker-based weapons platforms.

While the exercise enables 2nd SCR Soldiers to continue strengthening their combat skills, the exercise will also help

validate the Army's draft doctrine for Stryker Brigade Combat Teams weapon system qualification, Jones said.

In July, about 100 3rd Squadron Soldiers are scheduled to travel to the Ukraine for Exercise Rapid Trident 2007, during which they will conduct battalion-level operations with Ukrainian troops.

Training will be at the Ukrainian National Defense Academy in Kiev and at the Yavoriv Training Area near Lviv. The plan includes a brigade command post exercise along with a company-level field training exercise that pairs Stryker Soldiers with a Ukrainian motorized rifle company in a post-conflict stability operation scenario.

Another regimental road trip, scheduled for September, sends 2nd Squadron Soldiers to the Polish Army's Nadarzyce and Wedrzyn training areas and the Miroslawiec Air Base for the three-week long Exercise Immediate Response 2007, Jones said.

The urban operations and combined live-fire fire exercises are designed to improve interoperability and strengthen ties between U.S. and Polish forces, Jones said.

The regiment's last major exercise planned for the year is Torgau 2007.

In November, Russian Soldiers plan to travel to the JMTC's Grafenwoehr Training Area, draw U.S. weapons, and conduct a command post exercise and a field training exercise with a troop from the 2nd SCR.

The planned command post exercise aims to put U.S. and Russian leaders and command staffs together to accomplish a simulated peace-keeping mission.

USAREUR's chief exercise planner, Col. Eric Wagenaar, said the goal of the planned exercise is to improve interoperability between the U.S. and Russian armies.

"This exercise will bring together everyone from privates to generals on both sides," he said. "Hopefully, bonds will be formed and our militaries will continue to grow closer."



Photo by Sgt. Sam Smith, 1st Armored Division PAO

Staff Sgt. Nichole Burnett, a signals collector and analyst, 4th Squadron, assembles a squad automatic weapon during her unit's "Spur Ride" competition March 28 at Rose Barracks, Vilseck, Germany.

"The battle, Sir,
is not to the strong
alone, it is to the
vigilant, the active,
the brave." Proverbs
31:23

**Our
Heroes
Are
Home**

WELCOME
2-37 HOME 1-37
MIKE & TOM

**Welcome
HHC
S3**



Janine Dorsey



Robert Dorsey



Chelsea Iliff



Erik Iliff



Story by Karen S. Parrish
Iliff photo (facing page)
by Dave Melancon,
all other photos
by Gary L. Kieffer

'I love you. Goodbye.' Part IV: Welcome back!

Part I of this series, published in December 2005, featured the photos at left and opened this way:

U.S. Army, Europe regularly deploys and redeployes its Soldiers at the Army's orders, and devotes many of its resources to refining deployment procedures and sustaining families and Soldiers during separations. Still, many Army families — husbands and wives, parents and children — face loneliness, worry and fear as part of their daily lives.

How do they do it? What does it mean to be a "deployed family"?

As the series concludes, the families are together again — looking back on how they made it through, and ahead at what comes next.



Above: Signs line the fences of Friedberg, Germany during the weeks 1st Armored Division troops returned from Iraq.

Facing page: Robert and Janine Dorsey reunite as he returns home from deployment Feb. 10.

This page: Chelsea and Erik Iliff spend time together, the week after he returned, in the Giessen Education Center Feb. 27.



It's the classic story: two people meet, fall in love, get married.

For Army couples, though, there's an increasingly inevitable next chapter: the Soldier (or Soldiers, for dual military couples) gets orders to Iraq, Afghanistan, or Kuwait, deploys, and is gone for a year or more.

It's happened twice to Erik and Chelsea Iliff; once, so far, for Rob and Janine Dorsey. Both men deployed early in 2006 with 1st Armored Division's "Ready First," the 1st Brigade Combat Team. Both worked in Iraq for more than a year, after the Ready First got word in September that the BCT would remain six weeks longer than originally planned. And both women waited, worked, worried – and prayed their husbands would come home.

Once they did, new challenges emerged: after a year apart, how does a couple bond again? And what would another deployment mean?

Getting through

Chelsea said midway through the deployment that the yearlong separation was, for her, like working through the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Chelsea and Janine said their friends helped them reach "acceptance." Two of Janine's closest friends, she said, are Kirsten Smith and Christina Barnard; each is married to a Soldier assigned to Rob's company, and all three men deployed together.

Kirsten, Christina and Janine spent a lot of time, ate a lot of meals and watched a lot of movies together over the year, Christina said.

"Not many scary movies were watched this year," she added. "We tried to laugh."

"My friends became my family, and who I hung out with and did everything with," Kirsten said. "I feel like some of the friends here are truly friends for life,

like I was put here to meet them."

Janine said while military life may be known for friendships left behind at each change-of-station move, she will keep in touch with Kirsten and Christina.

"This was not normal, this whole year," she said. "If it wasn't for my friends I really would have fallen apart."

Rob, Kevin Smith and Wesley Barnard said they had also formed close friendships – fostered by shared danger and close living conditions – during the deployment.

"What we did together, we definitely bonded," Rob said.

Kevin pointed out that while their spouses spent a lot of time together by choice, deployed Soldiers very rarely have any time alone.

"There's times when you just need some 'me' time," he said. "I don't care if it's just sitting down and watching a movie by yourself, there are just days when you don't want anybody to mess with you. But you don't always get that; it's hard to come by."

Erik said after living and working with other Soldiers for more than a year, the seven-half-day "reintegration" work schedule troops go through after returning home helps them readjust.

"The guys that I went through reintegration with I'd seen every day for a year," he said. "It's comforting just to check in and to know that they're doing all right. We'd been looking out for each other for the last year-plus, and I don't think that ends when you get back here. You still have to look out for each other."

Back together

One senior spouse who had been through several deployments said each time her husband came home, she met a

different person.

None of the couples interviewed for this article has weathered more than two deployments, but all say the time apart brought changes.

Kirsten: "I do think we've both changed a lot; at 23 and 24 you do a lot of growing up and a lot of changing. It's been interesting to see how much of the same Kevin is still there, how much has improved, how much has grown and come more into himself. He has said that he's noticed that in me, too."

Kevin: "She's lived by herself now for the past 13 months. As young as she is, she became very set in her ways. Here I come, and I've got these preconceived notions of how things used to be. And this is how things are supposed to be, and apparently that's not how things are anymore."

Christina: "We made sure we communicated a lot while he was gone. I do respect that they have to think about their job. But he told me early on, 'I need something else to think about too. I need something else to worry about.' He still needed to be my husband. Right now it's stupendous, but I am happy that we had a strong marriage going into this."

Wesley: "You've got to have an open line of communication, or the whole house just crumbles out from underneath your feet. If you don't have a strong marriage going into a deployment – I've seen enough marriages that just didn't make it. If your foundation isn't strong, then there's nothing for you to come back to."

Janine: "I'm happy to see him, but I'm so used to doing things by myself for so long. I know him, so I know how he is, but it's different to have him back and to fall back into that. Of course, I'd rather have him back and deal with that than anything else."

Rob: "For me and Janine, it's made our marriage stronger. Just being gone for 13 months and seeing life ticking away at a moment's notice, I find that coming back we don't stress as much as we used to about certain things. We're happy to just be with each other ... to just be breathing air."

Chelsea: "I think that's something Erik and I have struggled with. We got to be pretty good at being deployed people. I had my routine, and Erik had his routine, and it's the whole process of bringing those back together again. It can be a challenge, and it's a challenge for a lot of people."



Clockwise from front right: Christina Barnard, Janine Dorsey, Sophia Dorsey, Kirsten Smith, Kevin Smith, Janine's son Kekai, Rob Dorsey and Wesley Barnard.

Erik: "Before we redeployed we had a chaplain brief on what to expect when you come back. The big thing he stressed was communication and talking about your expectations, which we did before I returned, and we're still having some issues with that. I can't imagine having not talked about it, how difficult it would have been."

What's next?

While the Army works to maintain "dwell time" – the period a unit spends recuperating and retraining between deployments – to at least 12 months, deployment duration has edged above that mark, as the 1st BCT's did. For Army couples, the numbers that feed the operational needs of the military can often be reduced to a simpler equation: How much time are we willing to spend apart?

The general answer seems to be "not more than we need to." But would these four couples endure another deployment?

Kevin said he was proud of what his wife accomplished during his deployment, and was confident she could repeat the experience.

"When we had some Soldiers from our squad get injured, she was in D.C.," he said. "One of the Soldiers ended up in Walter Reed. She had never met this guy; he'd only come to us a couple months before the deployment. Without hesitation, she wanted to go visit him. She went and put a little basket together for him, just to let him know he wasn't forgotten. Things like that, she was doing all year for single Soldiers, helping out other wives, and it made me realize how great she really is. She'll do just fine if we get deployed again."

Kirsten said if Kevin deploys again,

she'll do "Just what I did this time: stay where he needs me to be and do what needs to be done to get us through it, emotionally, physically and mentally."

Chelsea and Erik said the idea of another deployment raises a conflict: the Army is his career, something they've both given a lot of time and effort to. Still, they want to

raise a family, and Chelsea has two college degrees and her own career goals. For the Iliffs, much seems to depend on his next duty assignment.

"We're tired of being good at being separated," Chelsea said. "It's time for us to be married again. That's something we're really looking forward to doing, settling down and actually having a normal life. That is something we really miss. We can do this if we have to, and we can be good at it, (but) it's not our overall goal for our marriage. I think if we have to deploy again we'll go into it positively, like we went into this one. We'll do it positively, like we did this one. But I think we've had enough."

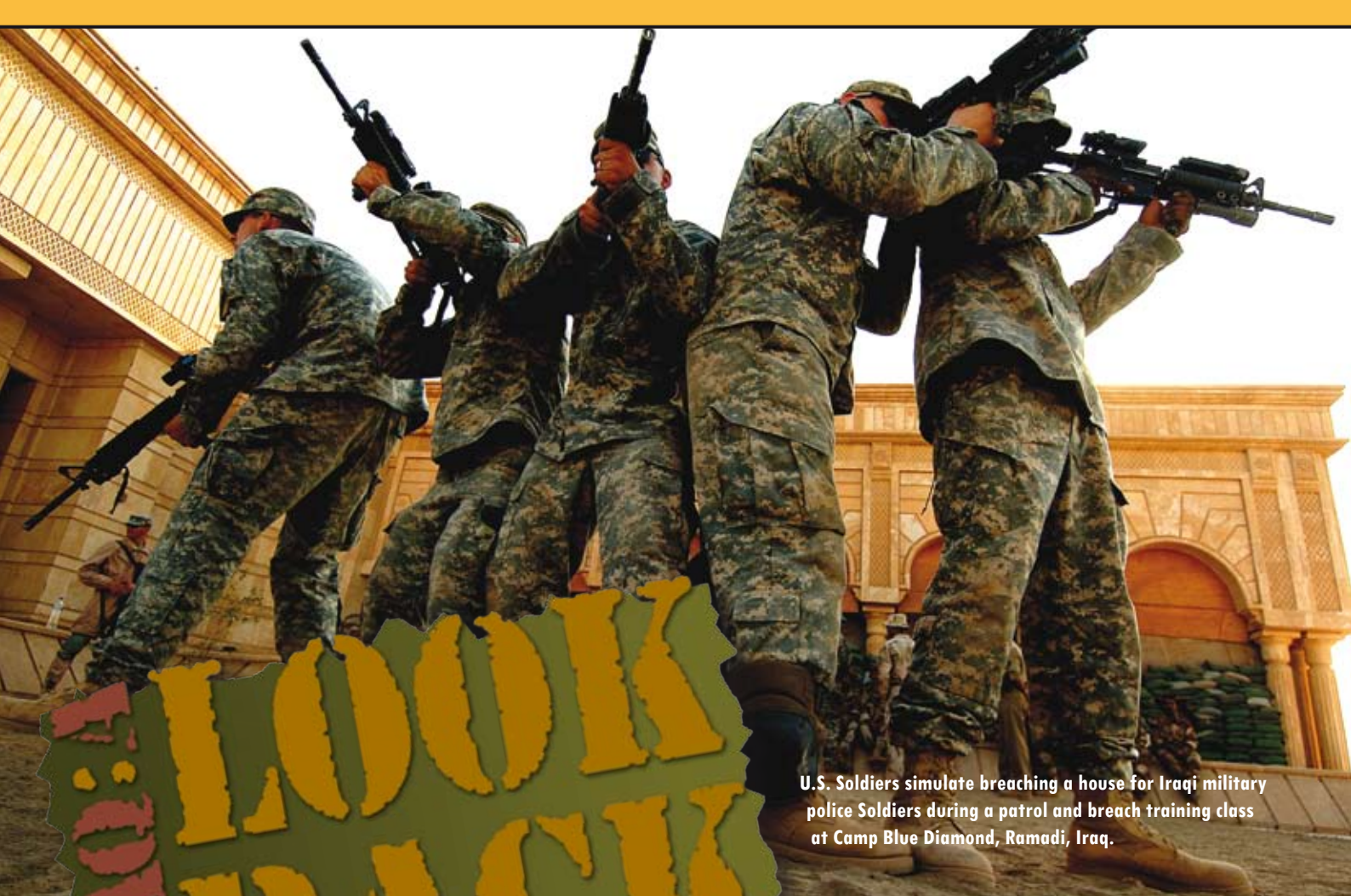
Erik, a captain, is preparing to attend the school he needs for promotion to major. He said many of his fellow officers are choosing to leave military service.

"I'm the only two-deployment junior captain, pre-career-course, who's staying in," from his battalion, he said. "All the other guys who were lieutenants with me on the last deployment, and captains with me on this one, they're all getting out, except for me."

Janine said if Rob gets deployed again, she plans to spend more time with her son Kekai and daughter Sophia, although she still wants to work. During this deployment, she said, she took college courses and got involved in several community activities.

"Next time, if he does get deployed, I plan to just come home every night," she said.

Editor's note: The following article, "Iraq: A Look Back," details what Rob, Kevin, Wesley and Erik accomplished during 1st BCT's deployment.



U.S. Soldiers simulate breaching a house for Iraqi military police Soldiers during a patrol and breach training class at Camp Blue Diamond, Ramadi, Iraq.

Story by Karen S. Parrish
Iraq photos by Air Force Tech Sgt.
Jeremy Lock; Iliff portrait photo by Dave
Melancon; Dorsey, Smith and Barnard
portrait photos by Gary L. Kieffer

For 411 days,

1st Armored Division's "Ready First" Brigade Combat Team filled more than 3,500 pairs of U.S. boots on the ground in Iraq. The BCT deployed first to Tal Afar – once known as "Al Qaeda's town," but on the road to stability when the brigade arrived in January 2006 – and shifted position to Ramadi in May and June.

Ramadi, then, was notorious as the most violent city in Iraq. The Ready First augmented U.S. Marine and Iraqi forces in an offensive aimed at quelling insurgents, whose reported tactics included kidnapping, torture and murder of Ramadi citizens.

By the end of July troops had achieved solid progress, Col. Sean MacFarland, commander of the Ready First (officially 1st AD's 1st Brigade Combat Team), reported during a Pentagon press conference.

Speaking from Iraq, MacFarland said, "(Insurgent) attacks are down 25 percent over the past couple of months, and coalition forces, together with the Iraqi security forces, have steadily increased their presence inside of the city. The Iraqi police recruiting has soared tenfold, and the Iraqi army readiness has improved to the point where Iraqi army battalions are now assuming the lead in portions of the city and its suburbs."

MacFarland updated his assessment after the brigade returned to U.S. Army, Europe and the Soldiers' home bases in Germany. After nine months in Ramadi, he said, the Ready First's infantry, cavalry, armored, engineer, field artillery and support Soldiers – with augmentation from all the other ser-

vices – left it a tangibly different city.

"I think we achieved decisive results at the tactical level that have begun to have positive effects at the operational and even strategic levels of the war," MacFarland said.

Four 1st BCT Soldiers who served under MacFarland – two infantry sergeants, one medical sergeant and a field artillery battalion intelligence officer – described their contributions to those tactical results.

Door-kicking diplomats

Staff Sgt. Robert Dorsey and Sgt. Kevin Smith served as squad leader and team leader, respectively, for the same squad in Company B, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment. Staff Sgt. Wesley Barnard worked as senior medic for the company. After the three returned to Germany with the rest of the Ready First, they gathered in the living room of Dorsey's on-post quarters to look back over their year-plus in the desert.

Smith, the 24-year-old senior team leader in the squad, said he and Dorsey spent most of their time in the streets, rounding up bad guys while trying to establish good relationships with Iraqis in general.

"On a normal day we were running two missions a day," he said. "We were doing mostly census, going through the neighborhoods and finding out who lived where, what people did for a living ... people in the neighborhood would tell us 'Hey, this guy is bad and we're willing to write statements and say that he's done these things,' and then we'd go pick him up."



“... you don’t know if you’re going to be met by people with AK-47s or families with little kids.”
Soldiers supporting 1st Armored Division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team conduct an early morning raid in the Tameem district of Ramadi, Iraq.

Dorsey, 27, said the squad faced an insurgent attack within its first two weeks in country.

“We were doing a patrol, one of our first patrols moving down a street,” he said. “We hit an intersection and we took fire from somewhere on a building. The rounds impacted at my feet, literally right in front of me. At the same time we had a car in front of us, and something came out of the car window, I think it was a grenade.”

Whatever it was, it blew up 20 or 30 feet from the Soldiers, Dorsey said.



Staff Sgt. Robert Dorsey

Smith added, “It didn’t injure anybody. The car took off, and we engaged. That was one of the hairiest moments we had.”

Dorsey said the attack built the Soldiers’ confidence and helped them understand the reality they faced.

“Once the you-know-what hit the fan most of it was muscle memory, but at the same time in the back of your mind you remember some of your training,” he said. “I was able to deal with



Sgt. Kevin Smith

everything there, from that point on, pretty well.”

Smith said the incident proved to him that he could rely on his fellow Soldiers; he had joined the unit shortly before the deployment and participated in only a few weeks of the months-long training other 1BCT troops had completed together.

“It was great to see that the training actually did kick in. I didn’t have to re-direct my team, reposition them or anything. As soon as we took contact everybody did what they had been trained to do,” he said. “It made me feel a whole lot better about the whole situation. I saw that my Soldiers were well trained,

as I’d been told they were, and that we had a good core group to work with.”

Dorsey said to him, the dual missions of combating insurgency while rebuilding a nation’s security made operations in Iraq very different from the wars fought by previous generations of U.S. forces.

“We had the fighting insurgencies, and the eye-opening pain of making good relations with the people, so you’re kind of dealing with two different things there. You didn’t always feel like you were in a war, in the sense of fighting a uniformed army battling over the hill,” he said. “It’s not like we were getting directly fought back by the insurgency. It was mostly IED (improvised explosive device) attacks, sniper fire or mortar attacks – indirect, not so much in-your-face.”

Smith added, “You had to keep in mind how to tone it down and be prepared to go to violence of action pretty much at any moment. Just going through the neighborhood, trying to enhance our picture of who lives here, what they do, what their situation is, you go into a house (and) you don’t know if you’re going to be met by people with AK-47s or families with little kids. So you go in expecting the worst, but then when you get there you and your Soldiers have to be like, ‘Okay, this just happens to be an innocent family that just happens to be living in this terrible place and we have to treat them as they deserve to be treated.’ I couldn’t imagine having to live in a country like that. Living where you don’t have electricity or running water.”

Rob said while he empathized with the local population, he and his squad remained ready to react.

“As a squad leader I kept an eye on my Soldiers to make sure they weren’t crossing the line. Which none of them ever did,” he said. “We had a job to do and we were there to do it, and if there was a need to step up the violence of action, you were doing the missions.”

Medic!

Barnard, 32, had a different view of the mission most of the time, he said. As senior medic, he handled radio traffic and emergency response at the company headquarters, directing the four junior medics who accompanied the combat Soldiers on

missions.

"I would relay (incoming messages) to the first sergeant and the company commander. They would make their command decisions and move the pieces where they needed to move, or give additional support assets to go recover a vehicle or push more people out to handle whatever situation or events were going on," he said.

Additionally, Barnard acted as a medical quick-reaction force, he said, adding, "I had a medic on the ground with the platoons, and they would take whatever casualties they could take. If there were extras I was always available to run out and pick up whatever casualties they couldn't pick up."

He also choppered out with wounded Soldiers evacuated by air for treatment, doing everything possible to stabilize them until they could reach a medical facility, he said.

"In Tal Afar I actually did have my own aid station with a helo pad that we had to use twice. We flew out one Iraqi soldier and we had to fly out two of our guys. But down in Ramadi, the timeframe to fly guys out was significantly longer. We were looking at an 18-minute ride from where we were to the nearest medical facility with any kind of doctors," he said. "I made probably 30 runs from the time we got to Ramadi, from June to December."

The company lost one Soldier during the deployment, Barnard said. Sgt. Edward W. Shaffer, 23, died Dec. 27 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, of injuries sustained when a roadside bomb detonated near him in Ramadi Nov. 13.

"That was a bad night. That was rough to deal with; still some issues going there," Barnard said. "While you're deployed you kind of have to tuck it away and save it. I mean, you can get on the Internet and write back and forth to his parents, and you can send your condolences that way. You can't let your emotions overwhelm you. You have to try and keep some semblance of control. Otherwise you start second-guessing yourself and making decisions that you normally wouldn't make. That's the best thing that I can tell people: deal with it when you're ready to come to terms with it. Dealing with it during a deployment is probably not a good idea."



Staff Sgt. Wesley Barnard

Barnard said as the person in charge of the health and well-being of 158 fellow Soldiers, he knew his actions could affect how many troops made it home.

"That does wear on your mind a lot. Thankfully with the casualties we did have, the training does take over. You just get on the ground, you open your aid bag and things just start moving," Barnard said. "All you know is that you've got a guy laying there that's bleeding, and just react to it and go with the flow ... there are a hundred things that you can do and it's just a matter of picking the right one."

A matter of intelligence

Capt. Erik Iliff said he performed two distinct missions during the 1BCT deployment: in Tal Afar, he worked in the Joint Coordination Center, helping train Iraqi military and police forces to take over the security and reconstruction mission there from U.S. troops. After moving to Ramadi, he served as battalion intelligence officer for 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment.

Following his return home, Iliff sat one afternoon in the Giessen Education Center, where his wife, Chelsea, works, and talked about his deployment. He said his capstone event happened his last week in country.

Days before he returned to Germany, he left Ramadi for a mission, escorting the mayor of that city on an official visit to



"You just get on the ground, you open your aid bag and things just start moving."

A 1st Armored Division medic prepares to treat a wounded Iraqi man injured during a suicide car bomb explosion at an intersection in Ramadi, Iraq.

his counterpart in Tal Afar. Iliff said that gave him a rare opportunity to judge whether the progress the brigade initiated at its first location continued after the unit left.

"When I first showed up there at the JCC in Tal Afar, it was very much American-run," he said. "When I was there we really tried to train the Iraqi forces as much as we could to make them autonomous, so they could operate on their own. At the point where they pulled the Americans out, it was completely Iraqi-run, with just a radio for them to call Americans if they



"Ramadi can be a place that's safe for people, where the stores are open and businesses are coming back into the city."

A 1st Armored Division Soldier hands out fliers to local Iraqis at a market while on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq.

needed them. In our opinion that was a little shaky; we weren't quite sure how it was going to work out. Then I got pulled down to Ramadi and I didn't really hear from anyone up there for a while."

But when he returned to Tal Afar just before 1BCT redeployed, he said, the Iraqi forces there still reported to the mayor daily, still coordinated joint missions between Iraqi army and police units, and municipal officers still managed repairs to power lines and other infrastructure.



Capt. Erik Iliff

"They were doing everything we'd trained them on, by themselves, and that was just really nice to see," Iliff said. "It was encouraging to me to see the work that we'd done up there has taken. To me, it's such a success story."

Iliff said much of that success is due to the Iraqi officials working in Tal Afar, including the general in charge of the Iraqi brigade there, and the mayor, a former general who served as an Iraqi division commander.

"They really took responsibility for the city," he said. "I think without the specific Iraqis in that equation it wouldn't have been as successful as it was. They put the right people in the situation to succeed, and we can take some credit for it but I think the burden of that is on them."

Iliff said he compares Ramadi, now, to Tal Afar when the brigade arrived in January 2006.

"It was bad but rapidly improving, and I think that's why we took the mayor of Ramadi to meet the mayor of Tal Afar, to show him, 'In a year this is where your city can be, a direction you can go,'" he said. "Ramadi can be a place that's safe for people, where the stores are open and businesses are coming back into the city."

After the 1BCT moved to Ramadi, Iliff said, brigade Soldiers worked with Iraqi forces there as well, but his own job mainly involved intelligence analysis, identifying developing threats and working with operational elements to identify and eliminate targets.

Iliff said he also helped establish intelligence-sharing between coalition forces and Iraqi Soldiers and police. He pointed out that intelligence is critical not only to nullify potential threats, but also to track results over time.

"The nature of my job is to weigh historical trends and I get to help establish and qualify whether we were being successful or not," he said. "After looking at it for a solid six months, I think I can say we were successful."

Editor's note: some information is from a 1st Armored Division Public Affairs article written by Sgt. Mark S. Patton.

CHEVRON NOTES

This is an incredibly busy time in U.S. Army, Europe. We are welcoming home redeploying Soldiers as we are preparing others to deploy. At the same time, we still have the business of running USAREUR and continuing with transformation. Though the missions change – deploying, redeploying, preparing for Joint Task Force-East – noncommissioned officers always have the charter of taking care of their Soldiers. That is a mission too important to be overcome by events.

Taking care of Soldiers begins with integrating new Soldiers into the unit. I know it's a cliché, but first impressions are lasting impressions. That new Soldier's first impression not only determines what he thinks of you – his NCO-IC – but also the rest of his unit, his surroundings, his fellow Soldiers and the Army itself. If this first impression is of a caring, compassionate leader, that impression is certainly going to go a long way toward making that Soldier a loyal and dedicated member of the team who can be trusted and depended on by his fellow Soldiers.

At the same time, you must get to know your new Soldiers, delve into their backgrounds and find out where they're coming from. Learn what he or she was involved with before joining the Army. This isn't being nosy. This is the information you must have to build a risk-management matrix so you can anticipate trouble areas and steer that Soldier away from them. Learning about Soldiers' character, habits, and likes and dislikes will help you train and prepare them for combat missions.

NCOs take care of our most valuable asset – our Soldiers. Many of our Soldiers may be going through some emotional turbulence. The whole deployment cycle can be an emotional roller-coaster. I think every Soldier who has

deployed has experienced that adrenaline rush you feel only when you're in a combat zone. After experiencing that adrenalin spike for so long, it's hard to turn it off when you redeploy. But there can be other factors as well. A Soldier may be dealing with issues that aren't apparent to the casual observer. These issues can easily overwhelm a Soldier and cause him or her to engage in self-destructive or reckless behavior. That's why you must know your Soldiers. There is no substitute for that.

Our Soldiers are special young men and women who volunteered to step into harm's way and defend their country. Over and over again, on the field of battle, they have proven their bravery and maturity well beyond their years. But they are still young people who want to have fun. They aren't trying to hurt anyone or get hurt themselves, but it still happens. It's hard enough to explain to a Soldier's spouse or parents that their husband, wife, son or daughter died in combat. It's even harder to explain to those loved ones how their son or daughter returned safely from deployment and then was killed in a car accident because of reckless driving.

We, as NCOs, have a responsibility to our Soldiers, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We talk about engaged leadership and we try to define what engaged leadership is in reference to maintaining the good order and discipline of our force. Simply put, engaged leadership means being involved with your Soldiers, knowing your Soldiers and knowing where your Soldiers are at all times. We've had two fatal accidents recently. In both cases, all of the Soldiers in the vehicle were specialists and privates first class.



Engaged leadership doesn't mean you should go out drinking with your Soldiers until 0400 and then race back to make the PT formation. Your Soldiers don't need another drinking buddy. They need engaged leaders who realize they can't go out partying with their Soldiers and take care of their Soldiers at the same time. It is imperative that NCOs know **WHERE** their Soldiers are, **WHO** their Soldiers are with, **WHAT** they are doing, and **WHY** they are engaging in that behavior. This means practicing engaged leadership, and it goes right along with the NCO Creed: "No one is more professional than I."

Every time an NCO recites the NCO Creed, he or she reaffirms that commitment to his or her Soldiers. "My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind – accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers ... All Soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my Soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own." As NCOs, this creed is our charter. This is who we are and what we must do to take care of our Soldiers. Anything less is simply unacceptable.

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